

Building Vocabulary

Read About Read Alouds Vocabulary Activities

Vocabulary Activities: Story Extensions

These vocabulary activities are story extenders designed to extend and deepen children's knowledge of the rare words found in texts read aloud. These activities also feature opportunities for children to give elaborated responses or more extensive dialogue.

Note: These activities were adapted with permission from the Developing Talkers: Pre-K © supplemental lessons.

Examples/Non-Examples

Children talk about pictures and determine if picture cards are examples of a vocabulary word.

MATERIALS: *Picture cards (4 to 8 cards)*

1. Choose vocabulary word(s) to teach.
2. Choose an assortment of pictures to show the children. (Clipart libraries are great sources for free child friendly pictures.) Some pictures should be examples and others should be non-examples.
3. Try to include pictures that will help children deepen their understanding of the word. By talking about what the word is and what it is not, this gives children an opportunity to clarify their understanding of the word's meaning.
4. Show one picture at a time and have children talk about what they see.
5. Ask children if it is an example or non-example of the word. Tell children if it is an example to put their thumb up and say the word. If it is a non-example tell children to put their thumb down and say nothing.
6. Ask at least one child to explain their answer.
7. Have children lay the example cards in one column and lay the non-examples in another. To wrap up the activity, give a name to each category.
Variation: For some verbs and modifiers, you can make the activity more playful by asking children to act out the word instead of put their thumb up.

Example

If teaching the word *munch*, use pictures of:
Cracker (thumb up + say "munch")
Milk (thumb down – have to drink)
Carrot (thumb up + say "munch")
Pretzel (thumb up OR act out munching)
Yogurt (thumb down – just swallow)

Act-It-Out

Children act out vocabulary words and practice using the word.

MATERIALS: *No materials or simple classroom materials may be needed as props*

1. Teacher uses a child-friendly definition to explain the meaning of a vocabulary word.
 2. Teacher demonstrates acting out the word.
 3. Next the teacher asks the children to act out the word with the teacher. This might occur one child at a time or all students can act out together.
 4. As children are acting out the word, teacher uses the target word to describe children's actions.
 5. Ask at least one child to explain why they acted-it-out the way they did.
- Variation 1:* You can act out words that are opposites or examples and non-examples to differentiate the target word from other words.
- Variation 2:* You can use this as a team game. Divide the group into two teams of two. Tell the children to clap if they know how to act it out a vocabulary word the teacher names. The child, who claps first leads their team in acting out the word. Continue playing until all target vocabulary have been acted out
- Variation 3:* You can support children's acting by providing picture cards that help them better understand the concept.

Multiple Examples with Questions

Children will think deeply about a vocabulary word through questions and relating to personal experiences.

MATERIALS: *Picture cards that all represent the same word in different contexts (3-4 cards)*

1. Select several pictures that represent the target word in different contexts. Select some contexts children will be familiar with and a few they may have less background knowledge about.
2. For each picture, ask simple and complex thinking questions that will bring a clearer meaning about the contexts in which they might hear or use the target words.
3. For contexts children are likely to be familiar with, you might ask children to make a personal connection with the target word with a linking prompt.

Example

Questions/prompts to help with children process a deeper understanding for the word, *ship* include:

Describe what you see on this *ship*.

Do you know any parts of a *ship*?

Where is this *ship*?

Tell me about a time when you have seen a *ship*.

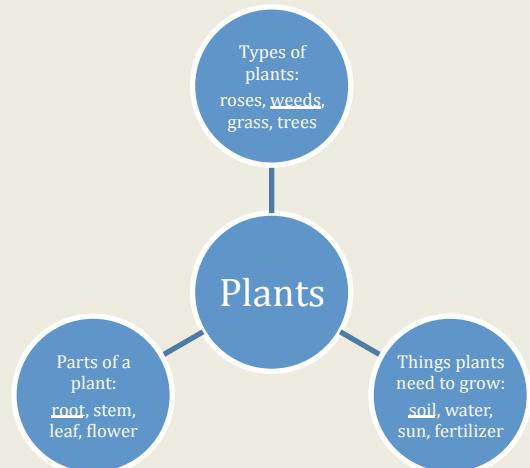
Semantic Web

Children will create a web of knowledge on a theme and the teacher will help them incorporate related target vocabulary words.

MATERIALS: *Chart paper or large dry erase board, markers*

1. Select a topic that student have some prior knowledge about but is also being studied or read about. Write the topic in a circle in the center of the paper.
2. In a brainstorming session, ask student to think of as many words as they can related to the theme.
3. As students think of related words, discuss each word and have students explain how it relates to the theme.
4. After discussing the word, draw a line from the central theme word and write the word on the chart paper.
5. The teacher tells students a category that the word fits into, writes the category above the word and draw a circle for this new category.
6. Ask students if they can think of any other words that fit that category. If so, discuss and record those words. If not, ask students to think of any words related to the central topic and continue creating new categories.
7. If students do not think of the target vocabulary on their own, ask pointed questions to elicit the words.
8. When students have thought of all the words they can related to the central theme, review all the categories.

After reading an informational text about plants, a semantic web can be used to elicit the following target words: *plant, root, weeds, soil*



Draw and Write Vocabulary Prompt

Children will draw and write about a target word using a sentence stem or writing prompt.

MATERIALS: *Vocabulary journals or paper*

1. Select a target word that student have some prior knowledge about.
2. Write a sentence stem or writing prompt that includes the target word and asks children to link the word to their past or future experiences.
3. Model drawing and writing about your own personal experience with the target word. Think aloud as you draw and write.
4. Explain to children that they can draw, write their own way, or ask you to help them write their ideas.
5. As children draw, offer to take their dictations and write their words at the top or bottom of their paper. Write exactly what the child says and say each word as you write.
6. Read the child's dictation and point to each word as you write.
7. Ask the student to read their dictation aloud with you.

Use this sentence stem with the target word *surprise*.

*I was **surprised** when ____.*



I was surprised when my friend gave me a balloon!